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(FARCE.)

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MATCHMAKING FATHER;

—OR—

THE BASHFUL SUITOR.

A FARCE

IN ONE ACT,

—BY—

Shettel and George.

—o—

—TO WHICH IS ADDED—

DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS—ENTRANCES AND EXITS—RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE, AND THE WHOLE OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

—o—

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

MR. EDGEWAY	*A bashful suitor.*
MR. WILEY	*A matchmaking father.*
GLADYS	*His fair daughter.*
NANCY	*His plain daughter.*

—x—

COSTUMES.

MR. WILEY—Smoking gown, white vest, dark trousers, white shirt and collars, black stripe tie and slippers.

MR. EDGEWAY.—Evening dress.

GLADYS.—A becoming evening dress.

NANCY.—An unbecoming evening dress; mother-in law wig, also bare scalp, for effect in tussel with Edgeway.

—x—

PROPERTIES.

Book and sprinkling can for Gladys; pipe and cane for Wiley.

—x—

TIME—30 MINUTES.

—x—

TAGE DIRECTIONS.

R., means Right; L., Left; R. H., Right Hand; L. H., Left Hand; C., Centre; S. E., 2d E., Second Entrance; U. E., Upper Entrance; M. D., Middle Door; F., the Flat; D. F., Door in Flat; R. C., Right of Centre; L. C., Left of Centre.

R. C. C. L. C. L.

*** The reader is supposed to be upon the stage facing the audience.

A Matchmaking Father·

—OR,—

THE BASHFUL SUITOR.

SCENE.—Drawing room in WILEY'S *house*—GLADYS *seated on sofa* L., *with open book in hand;* WILEY *seated in rocker, smoking pipe.*

Wiley. Your sister, Nancy, spoke to me this morning, about having another reception dress. Now, tell me, what in thunder! does she want with a reception dress? She never receives. I've been decking that girl with silks and satins ever since she's been out of her teens—and Lord knows how long that is—

Gladys. Father! father! you are making yourself old by worrying so much.

Wiley. No! darn it, it's my family that's making me old. As I was saying, I've been spending money on that girl for clothes for the last thirty-eight years—

Gladys. Twenty-eight, father.

Wiley. Thirty-eight, I say. Don't I know the ages of my young uns?

Gladys. Young uns? Why, father, you shock me. One would suppose you were right out of the back woods.

Wiley. I wish to heavens I was in 'em. Money, money, dress, dress, they are the only words in a woman's vocabulary. It is a waste of cash and material to attire Nancy in fine raiment. She is positively and hopelessly homely and any attempt at adornment makes it all the more evident. I have given up all hopes of ever making a match for her.

Gladys Matches, they say, are made in Heaven.

Wiley. Judging from your sister's luck, they must have

suspended business up there. Why, there's young Haskins, who visited us last summer, a poor, poverty-stricken nobody, with no prospects at all. I was certain I could arrange a match between him and Nancy, but when I merely hinted at the matter in an off-hand way, just to sound him, it scared him half to death, and he hasn't been inside this house since that day. Oh! it's no use, no use, I have given up all hopes.

Gladys. It isn't so desperate as you think it is.

Wiley. Don't be deceived, Gladys. It is a hopeless case. More than that, she even drives your suitors away.

Gladys. You are mistaken—I have always had as many suitors as I desired. Nancy never interferes. Sometimes, I think I have indeed too many.

Wiley. Well would it be, if you could share them with your less fortunate sister.

Gladys. How willingly would I give a share of them to her.

Wiley. Why, Gladys, that suggests an idea. Old Mr. Edgeway, who was once a suitor for your mother's hand, has spoken of a fancy his son has taken for you. Young Edgeway, as you know, is a very modest—I might say timid young man, but will in course of time, become as bold as the majority.

Gladys. But, father, I will not think of such a thing. I had been anticipating a proposal, and now that you apprise me of his fancy for me, I feel certain of it. If he comes, I shall not be at home.

Wiley. Tut! tut! listen to me, daughter, listen to me—

Gladys. I shall not marry the big, awkward, blundering, bashful booby.

Wiley. Hark, my child!

Gladys. I shan't! I shan't! I would rather shut myself up in a convent, than marry him.

Wiley. Will you allow me to speak? I have not imparted my idea to you yet. It is this. When Mr. Edgeway proposes to you, like all young men suffering from too much modesty, he will direct his gaze to the floor. Just before the crisis you could quietly steal away and allow your sister to take your place by his side. We could have the room darkened for the occasion. She will gladly accept him, of course. When he discovers his mistake, he will be too

abashed to wiggle out of the dilemma. I will then appear and, by commenting on their loving attitude, will add to his embarassment. Oh! it's a great scheme and can't fail to succeed if you will lend me your aid.

Gladys. A brilliant idea.

Wiley. Do you take to it?

Gladys. I will do my utmost to unite two loving hearts.

Wiley. (*rising*) Good girl! good girl! if we are blessed with success in this venture, I will buy you and your sister a dozen gowns apiece—reception, deception or any sort you choose.

Gladys. (*leaves sofa, rushes to* WILEY *and pats him on cheek*) You are such a dear, old papa.

Wiley. You are a very dear, little daughter. Good looks and good sense. The very image of your departed mother, in both features and mind. But, tell me, who in thunder does Nancy take after?

Gladys. (*edging away*) Ma always said she much resembled you.

Wiley. (*thumping on floor with cane*) It's a lie! it's a lie! Your mother never said any such thing. I was the smartest and handsomest young man in the village. Your mother often told me so.

Gladys. Yes, but that was only when she wanted ice cream or something.

Wiley. We didn't have such stuff in those days. Times were hard; young men saved their money and didn't spend it foolishly as they do nowadays.

Gladys. Ma said you used to loose all your change playing poker behind the barn with the man who is now our minister.

Wiley. Will you quit informing me what your mother said? Next thing you will be telling me your mother said I was a convict or a hangman. Your imagination is entirely to vivid.

(*bell rings*

Gladys. The bell! the bell! It's Edgeway!

Wiley. What, Edgeway? Don't forget the plan. I will find your sister at once and prepare her for her part.

(*stage darkens, exit,* WILEY, R.

Gladys. Poor Edgeway! poor unsuspecting victim! I wouldn't be in his boots for the world.

Enter, EDGEWAY, C.

Edgeway. Miss Gladys—Miss Wiley, I say—excuse me do I find you at home?

Gladys. Good evening, Mr. Edgeway; I am so glad to see you once again.

Edgeway. I am so glad—you are so glad—Gladys—I mean Miss Wiley.

Gladys. Be seated, Mr. Edgeway. (EDGEWAY *crosses to chair,* GLADYS *seats herself on sofa—coughing*) Here's the sofa.

Edgeway. I—I perceive.

(*crosses to sofa and takes seat beside* GLADYS.

Gladys. This is more comfortable than a chair.

Edgeway. No—that is—I presume it may be Do you think it will rain to-morrow?

Gladys. Why do you ask me? Do you want to go picnicing? Really, I dare not say, for fear I would tell you wrong.

Interval of silence, during which EDGEWAY *fidgets and twiddles his thumbs,* GLADYS *toys languidly with handkerchief.*

Edgeway. I fear—you are—not interested in my conversation. (*face turned from her*

Gladys. Oh! deeply interested.

Edgeway. You don't say so. Now—what was—I—about to remark.

Gladys. Something brilliant, I feel certain.

Edgeway, Your adulation—Miss Wiley—will turn my head.

Gladys. (*aside*) Would to goodness it would. It would be much more pleasant than speaking to his back. (*aloud*) I always lavish praise where merits invites it.

Edgeway. You do me—too much honor, I assure you. (*interval of silence—business*) Is—is your father well?

Gladys. In very good health, thank you.

Edgeway. I noticed—you were out walking yesterday—with your aunt, I presume.

Gladys. Beg pardon, that was my sister.

Edgeway. Pardon me. By the way—Miss Wiley, I would like to tell you—a little story.

Gladys. Please tell it, I love stories.

Edgeway. Now let me---think. I must recall the story. But I fear it will bore you.

Gladys. Go on! I am already interested.

Edgeway. There was once a young man, I knew him personally. I—er—attended his wedding recently.

Gladys. Is this a romance, Mr. Edgeway?

Edgeway. It—is—nothing,—if not romance. He—loved a young lady of my acquaintance. He loved her deeply. He was always—timid about—proposing to the young lady, knowing well it would kill him if jilted by her. He didn't want to die young, so he put off the matter of proposal. Of course he did not want to wait until the lady was old before he married her, and then too some other chap might step between them. Procrastination was dangerous. But—I fear —I am not telling this well

(*mopes his brow with handkerchief*

Gladys. Do proceed. I don't like stories to end so abruptly.

Edgeway. Well, at last Chollie—that is his name—mustered sufficient courage to pop the question. The lady wisely accepted.

Gladys. What an exciting tale. You ought to write it up for a magazine.

Edgeway. What do you think of the lover?

Gladys. He is just my ideal. I detest bold men.

Edgeway. Putting yourself in the lady's place, would you have done as she? (*looks away from her*

Enter, NANCY, L., *takes* GLADYS *place, unseen by* EDGEWAY, GLADYS *exit,* L.

Nancy. Putting myself in her place, I think I would have done as she.

Edgeway. (*aside*) That's encouraging. I'll do it with one bold stroke. (*aloud—to* NANCY, *without looking up*) The story I have told is but a plain statement of my own case. I am here to plead for your hand.

Nancy. It is yours.

Edgeway. Darling! (*looking up*) Great Ceasar! What have I done?

Enter, WILEY, R.

Wiley. You have proposed to my Nancy. I bless you, my children.

Edgeway. The devil! I don't understand this, sir!

Wiley. Let me congratulate you, I wish you joy.

Edgeway. There is a serious mistake here. This is not the woman I love.

Nancy. Why Edgie, you said you did.

Edgeway. This is either a most egregious blunder on my part or a most diabolical deception on yours. By the gods, you must have resorted to some bit of oriental conjuring. (*to* MR. WILEY) I proposed to your younger daughter, Miss Gladys, she must have vanished, and this one appeared in her place.

Wiley. Mr. Edgeway, this is ridiculous. Why you have been making love to Nancy for the last hour. I heard you just ask her to marry you. She accepted. You both have my consent, and it is my duty as a father, to see that this engagement is not broken. You shall marry her.

(*thumps upon floor with cane*

Edgeway. Marry that hag? Never!

Nancy. (*leaping to her feet*) Oh! you cruel wretch! I'll show you! (*catches hold of* EDGEWAY

Edgeway. Murder! murder! take the blamed thing off! She's going to kiss me.

Nancy. I'm not, you nasty man.

(*grabs* EDGEWAY *by hair and drags him about*

Edgeway. Take it off! take it off!

Wiley. (*rapping with cane*) Stop! stop! this is scandalous! Edgeway, let her along, I say.

Edgeway. Make her stop! Police! police!

EDGEWAY *grabs her by hair, tearing off wig and exposing bare scalp.*

Nancy. Oh! oh! (*falls fainting on sofa*

Wiley. You young Jack anapes, you have killed her.

WILEY *catches* EDGEWAY *by collar and applies cane to his back;* GLADYS *rushes in* L., *with springling can and turns spray on* NANCY'S *face.*

CURTAIN.

THE END.

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